



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

TWO ANCIENT ISRAELITE AGRICULTURAL FESTIVALS *

BY JULIAN MORGENSTERN, Hebrew Union College,
Cincinnati.

MISHNAH TA'ANIT IV, 8 records a highly interesting ceremony. Rabban Simeon b. Gamaliel said: 'Israel had no festivals like the fifteenth of Ab and the Day of Atonement, for on them the maidens of Jerusalem used to go out, clad in white garments, that had been borrowed, in order not to put to shame those who had none (of their own). All these garments had to be previously dipped in water.¹ And the maidens of Jerusalem would go out and dance in the vineyards. And what would they say? "Young man, lift thine eyes and see what thou dost choose. Set not thine eyes upon beauty, but upon family, &c."'

* This paper was written in the winter of 1913 in response to the invitation of a committee of European Semitic scholars to contribute an article to a *Festschrift*, by means of which they intended to commemorate the sixtieth birthday of Immanuel Löw, Rabbi at Szegedin, Hungary, and famous Semitic scholar. The European war, however, prevented the publication of the *Festschrift*. After waiting for over two years, the author has determined to follow the example of Nöldeke, Littmann, and other scholars, and publish this article independently. He trusts that the scholarly world, and particularly he whom it was designed to honour, will still accept it as a small token of appreciation of and reverent tribute to true and exalted scholarship.

¹ According to the traditional interpretation, as recorded by Rashi (*l. c.*), **טבילה** means ritual washing, on the supposition that the owner may have worn the garments during menstruation. But the statement of R. Eliezer (Bab. Ta'anit 31 a), that even if the garments had been laid away in a chest **טבילה** was still necessary, shows that this was not for ritual purposes.

This custom presents many peculiar and interesting features, well worthy of investigation; the dances of the maidens in the vineyards, the white, borrowed garments, which had first to be dipped in water, and the words of the maidens, all give rise to wonder and question. A full and detailed investigation of the origin and significance of these strange rites would lead too far afield for the present study. But the consideration of the two days upon which these rites were celebrated, and the association of the rites with these days, may form the natural approach to the subject proper, and in itself yield valuable results.

Assuming for the present that the statement of the Mishnah has direct historic value, there cannot be the slightest doubt that these ceremonies could not have been performed on the Day of Atonement after its institution in post-exilic times according to the ritual of Leviticus. That was altogether a day of fasting, humility, and repentance, 'a day of self-affliction' (Lev. 16. 29), while these rites must by their very nature have been essentially joyful. Nor can we regard as convincing the reasons for the observance of these ceremonies on the Day of Atonement, advanced in the Mishnah, viz. that this was the anniversary of the consecration of Solomon's temple, and in the Talmud (Bab. Ta'anit 30 b), viz. that this was the day of divine pardon and forgiveness, as well as the day upon which the second tablets were given to Moses (Exod. 34 and Deut. 9. 25 ff., and cp. Rashi to Exod. 34 and Deut. 9. 10 and to Ta'anit 30 b), and consequently, because it was thus essentially a day of gladness and festivity, these joyful ceremonies were altogether appropriate to its celebration. The nature and peculiar ceremonies of the Day of Atonement are too firmly established

by the legislation of the Priestly Code (Lev. 16 ; 23. 26-32 ; Num. 29. 7-11) to either permit or justify festivities such as these. If, therefore, historical value can be attributed to this tradition, it must picture the celebration of a festival on the tenth day of the seventh month at a time previous to the institution of the Day of Atonement on this day according to the Priestly legislation, or more correctly, in view of the actual facts of Jewish history, previous to the Babylonian exile.

Now we do know that still by Ezekiel the tenth day of the seventh month was regarded as the New Year's Day (Ezek. 40. 1 ; cp. Bertholet, 195 ; Kraetzschmar, 263). This is to be inferred also from the fact that the blowing of the Jubilee cornet and the proclamation of the Jubilee year, which must naturally have taken place on the first day of the year, were fixed for the tenth day of the seventh month (Lev. 25. 9 ; cp. Bertholet, 89 f. ; Baentsch, 416). The celebration of this day must have been primarily of a joyful nature. In this light the merry dances of the maidens of Jerusalem in the vineyards would seem an altogether natural and appropriate way of celebrating the joyful New Year's Day. And since the celebration of these dances on the tenth of the seventh month, if at all historical, must have taken place in pre-exilic times, when this day was actually regarded as the New Year's Day, it may well be that there was some intimate relation between the two, and that we have thus stumbled upon one of the actual details of the pre-exilic New Year's Day celebration.

But according to the Mishnah these dances were held, not only on the Day of Atonement, but also on the fifteenth of Ab. Accounting for the celebration of this day in this joyful manner the Talmud records a number of interesting

and significant traditions (Ta'anit 30 b; 31 a; cp. also Baba batra 121 a and b and Midrash Lamentations Rabba, Introduction XXXIII, ed. Buber, 34 ff.). Of these, four have direct bearing upon our study.

I. According to R. Naḥman, the fifteenth of Ab was the day upon which the Benjamites, after the battle of Gibeah, captured the maidens of Shiloh, while dancing in the vineyards, and took them as wives (Jud. 21).

II. Said R. Joḥanan, the fifteenth of Ab was the day upon which the number of those who were doomed to die in the wilderness was completed. In explanation the following tradition is related (Jer. Ta'anit IV, 69 c; Midrash Lam. Rab., *l.c.*). During the entire forty years that the Israelites were in the wilderness, on the eve of every ninth of Ab, Moses would cause a herald to go and call out, 'Come forth to dig'. Then every man would come forth and dig a grave for himself and would sleep therein, that he might not die without his grave being dug. And on the morrow the herald would go and call out, 'Let the living separate themselves from the dead'. Then every one in whom there was life would stand up and come forth. So they would do every year. And in the fortieth year they did so, but on the morrow they all stood up. And when they saw this they were surprised and said, 'Perhaps we have erred in reckoning the new moon (and consequently this is not the ninth of the month)'. So they lay down again in their graves during the succeeding nights, until the night of the fifteenth. And then, when they saw that the moon was full, and that not a single one of them had died, and thus knew that they had reckoned the month correctly, and that the forty years in which it was decreed that those who had come forth

from Egypt should perish in the wilderness, were completed, that generation appointed that day, the fifteenth of Ab, as a festival. In addition to this the Tosafists (*ad locum*) relate that during the forty years in the wilderness deaths occurred only on the ninth of Ab.

III. According to Ulla, quoting R. 'Imri (cp. Midrash Lam. Rab., *l. c.*), the fifteenth of Ab was observed as a festival because on that day Hoshea b. Elah abolished the guards that Jeroboam b. Nebat had set up over the roads to prevent the people of the northern kingdom from going to celebrate the three annual pilgrimage festivals in Jerusalem (cp. 1 Kings 12. 26-33).

IV. R. Mathna said that the occasion of the celebration of the fifteenth of Ab was that on that day permission was given to bury those who had fallen at the capture of Bethar (on the ninth of Ab, A.D. 135, cp. Graetz⁴, IV, 150 f. and Jer. Ta'anit IV, 69 a).

It is significant that of these traditions two (I and III) correlate the celebration of these dances of the maidens of Jerusalem in the vineyards with the observance of an annual *hag*, or even with the three annual *haggim*, Pesah, Shabuot, and Succot. And not only that, but tradition I, which states that the dances of the maidens of Shiloh in their vineyards were also held on the fifteenth of Ab and were attended by the marriage of the maidens of Shiloh with the Benjamites, concealed in the vineyards, clearly identifies these dances with those of the maidens of Jerusalem in their vineyards, with the young men gathered about them too and selecting their wives from the dancers. The inference is justified that dances such as these may have been a regular, and even integral, part of the folk-celebration of the annual *hag* or of the three annual *haggim*.

This inference is supported by considerable evidence. Josephus expressly states (*Antiquities*, V, 2, 12) that the dances of the maidens of Shiloh were held three times during each year, when the men of Israel came up to the sanctuary to celebrate the three annual pilgrimage festivals, accompanied by their wives and children, precisely in the manner described in 1 Sam. 4. Furthermore, it is now generally recognized that the original meaning of *hag* was the sacred dance (cp. Gesenius-Buhl¹⁴, 191 f.), primarily around the sacred stone or cult object (cp. Wellhausen, *Reste des altaramaischen Heidentums*², 110), but which, by a very natural extension in folk custom, might easily come to be practised, in part at least, in the form of these dances by the maidens in the vineyards. And, finally, it is significant that every vineyard apparently had to have its *maḥōl*, or dancing-place, as the name must have originally connoted. This *maḥōl*, surrounding every vineyard, was a narrow, open space, intended undoubtedly, at least in its origin, for just these dances. The exact dimensions of the *maḥōl* are prescribed in Mishnah Kil'aim IV, 1-3.² All this evidence makes it certain that these dances were not mere sporadic celebrations of the maidens of Jerusalem and Shiloh, but were regularly observed, though not necessarily in identically the same form, throughout the country, at least in early times. And it is equally certain that these dances, clearly of a religious, as well as of a joyful character, were not celebrated occasionally, but as all the evidence indicates, at fixed times of the agri-

² Cp. also the Aramaic equivalent of *maḥōl*, *ḥinga* (from 𐤇𐤍𐤁), the dancing-place in the vineyard (Jastrow, 458 a), and also my article, 'The Etymological History of the Three Hebrew Synonyms for "to Dance",' *JAOS.*, XXXVI (1916), 321-33.

cultural year, and in connexion with the annual *ḥag* or *ḥaggim*.

On the other hand, two of the traditions (II and IV) connect the dances of the maidens of Jerusalem in the vineyards on the fifteenth of Ab with the cessation of some great national calamity that had happened on the ninth of Ab, but from the evil effects of which the people were freed only on the fifteenth.³ From ancient times the

³ In this connexion it may be noted that Josephus (*Wars*, II, 17, 5-7) relates that on the fifteenth of Ab an attack was made on the fortress of Antonia, which practically began the war with the Romans. On the previous day, which was also the festival of the Xylophory, or bringing the wood for the altar, the Sicarii, mingling with the crowds that thronged the temple, had already begun the attack upon the garrison. It is most natural to connect this festival of bringing the wood for the altar with the tradition recorded in the Talmud (Ta'anit 31 a; Baba batra 121 b; Midrash Lam. Rab., l. c.), also accounting for the celebration of the fifteenth of Ab by the dances of the maidens in the vineyards, that according to Rabba and R. Joseph this was the day upon which they ceased to cut wood for the altar. In support of this statement, a saying of R. Eliezer the Great, found in a Baraita, is cited, affirming that from the fifteenth of Ab on the heat of the sun began to diminish, and so they ceased to cut wood for the altar because it was no longer dry. Hence that day was called 'the day of breaking the saw'. One cannot but feel that Josephus has here confused matters somewhat, and that the festival of bringing the wood for the altar was celebrated, not on the fourteenth of Ab as he says, but on the fifteenth. In fact, it must be admitted that just here he has expressed himself rather obscurely as to the exact date in question, and that most probably he too meant that the fifteenth of Ab was the actual date of this festival. This is borne out by the fact that Mishnah Ta'anit IV, 5 records nine different annual occasions or festivals upon which wood was brought to replenish the temple supply. Of these the fifteenth of Ab was evidently the most important (cp. Bab. Ta'anit 28 a). This is also clearly stated in Megillat Ta'anit V (ed. Neubauer, p. 9). According to the Mishnah, the observance of the fifteenth of Ab as the festival of the wood-offering began in the days of Nehemiah (Neh. 10. 35). That, however, the festival is of more ancient origin will soon be demonstrated. Josephus further states that the massacreing had been going on for seven days previous to the fifteenth of Ab, i. e. from the ninth on. This might, therefore, be cited as another instance where the fifteenth of Ab, celebrated as a joyful festival, is intimately

ninth of Ab has been celebrated as a fast day in Judaism commemorating the destruction of the temple by Nebuchadrezzar. In fact Zech. 7. 5 ff. and 8. 19 would seem to imply that this fast in the fifth month was instituted immediately after the destruction of the temple, and had by the time of the prophet been thus observed for seventy years. The actual question there raised is whether the completion of the second temple did not abrogate the celebration of that fast, as well as the fasts of the fourth, seventh, and tenth months, all of which were by tradition associated with the destruction of the temple and the fall of Jerusalem. But it is quite significant that according to 2 Kings 25. 8, Jerusalem fell on the seventh of Ab, while according to Jer. 52. 12, this happened on the tenth of the month. It is impossible to determine which of these two dates is historically correct. But certainly if, as the passages from Zechariah actually imply, the celebration of the anniversary of the destruction of the temple as a fast day began immediately after the occurrence of that event, there would be no reason for holding this fast on the ninth of Ab, instead of on the seventh or tenth, as the case might have been. Furthermore, the very fact, already noted, of the traditional connexion between the joyful celebration of the dances in the vineyards on the fifteenth of Ab and some national calamity that had occurred on the ninth of the month, and the other evidence that these dances were merely a feature of the celebration of an annual *hag*, the usual duration of associated with certain events that transpired, or began to transpire, on the ninth. At the same time, Josephus, being a contemporary, probably has recorded actual historical events, rather than semi-historical traditions, and therefore this incident may hardly be applied directly to our present question.

which seems to have been seven days, lead us rather to suppose on the one hand that the fast on the ninth of Ab was older, probably much older, than the fall of Jerusalem, probably marked the beginning of the seven-day *ḥag* that concluded with the dances on the fifteenth, and on the other hand that its association with the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple, which had actually taken place on almost that very day, was the result of that process of attaching an historical significance to the ancient festivals, which probably began with the definite association of the story of the exodus from Egypt with the Passover festival, or rather with the combined Passover and Mazzot-festivals. No certain mention of this association is found in the oldest legislation (Exod. 23. 15; 34. 18),⁴ and yet it had become a firmly established tradition by the time of the composition of the J and E codes. Similarly the Holiness Code (Lev. 23. 43), undoubtedly the product of the early exilic period, for the first time definitely associated the Succot festival with the tradition that in the wilderness Israel had dwelt in booths. It is only post-Biblical tradition that associated Shabuot with the giving of the Decalogue (cp. *Jewish Encyclopaedia*, IX, 594). It was undoubtedly the same spirit which thus sought to justify the continued observance of the old agricultural festivals, most of the details of the celebration of which were certainly of non-Jahwistic origin, by correlating them with definite events in the history of Israel, that now associated the ancient fast on the ninth of Ab with the destruction of the temple. And, as we have seen, so complete and thoroughgoing was this association that only

⁴ Exod. 23. 9b and 15aβ and 34. 18b are undoubtedly redactorial insertions into the original text; cp. Holzinger 96, 117 and Baentsch 206 f., 223 f.

seventy years after the destruction of the temple the day had become to Zechariah and his contemporaries only the anniversary of that catastrophe, and, it now seemed, need no longer be celebrated, since the new temple replaced that for which they mourned and fasted. That this hypothesis is correct will soon become completely apparent.

We return now to the celebration of the dances on the tenth day of the seventh month. We have seen that if the account of these dances be historical, and there seems no adequate reason to doubt this, they must have been celebrated before the exile and in connexion with the observance of New Year's Day. As we have seen, both Mishnah and Talmud associate their celebration with historical events other than those by which they account for the celebration of the dances on the fifteenth of Ab. Yet the Mishnah itself seems to imply that the dances on the two days were of the same nature and purpose. And the very fact that the attendant ceremonies, the borrowing of the white garments that had to be dipped in water, and the words of the maidens, recited or chanted in chorus during the dances, were the same on both days, leads to the same conclusion. If, therefore, as we have inferred, the celebration of the dances on the fifteenth of Ab represented the concluding rites of a great seven-day *ḥag*, which began on the ninth with fasting and mourning, we would expect to find this true also of the dances on the tenth day of the seventh month. That this was actually the case is easily demonstrated.

According to Exod. 23. 16 and 34. 22, the oldest Biblical legislation, the *ḥag ha'asiph* was celebrated at the end of the year. In itself it was hardly the new year festival. Rather the language seems to imply that its

celebration marked the close of the old year, and that the beginning of the new year came immediately thereafter, fell probably on the very day after the close of the *ḥag*. Neither of these oldest Biblical references mentions the actual duration of the festival. But according to all other pre-exilic and exilic writings it was celebrated for seven days (Lev. 23. 39 ff.; Deut. 16. 13; 1 Kings 8. 65; Ezek. 14. 25). Now, since the New Year's Day was celebrated, at least in the period immediately preceding the exile, on the tenth day of the seventh month, and probably followed immediately upon the seven-day celebration of the ancient *ḥag ha'asiph*, or, as finally called in Deut. (16. 13), *ḥag hassuccot*, it follows that this last must have been celebrated during this period from the third to the ninth of the seventh month.⁵

In this connexion the tradition recorded in the Mishnah

⁵ It is true that Deut. 16. 13 dates the celebration of the Succot-festival only at the time of the gathering in of the produce of the threshing-floor and wine-press. This must have been the original practice in the days of the local shrines. Then the varying times of the harvest and threshing seasons in the different parts of the country must have caused a slight variation in the dates of celebration of the local festivals (cp. 1 Kings 13. 32 f.). But the practical application of the Deuteronomic principle of the central sanctuary naturally necessitated the fixing of one definite date for the celebration of the festival by the entire nation. And, as the evidence has now made clear, this must have been from the third to the ninth of the seventh month, with the tenth celebrated as New Year's Day. This probably explains the selection of the Succot-festival as the time for reading the law to the people every seven years (Deut. 31. 10 f.). Not so much because of the multitude assembled for the celebration of the festival (ver. 11 a; this is probably secondary, cp. Steuernagel, 111) as because of the association of the Succot-festival with New Year's Day, marking the beginning of the year of release, was this time selected for this purpose. Similarly, the opening ceremonies of the Jubilee year took place on this day (cp. above, p. 33), and similarly, too, Ezra began to read the law to the people on the New Year's Day, celebrated, however, in his time on the first of Tishri (Neh. 9. 1 ff.).

that the tenth day of the seventh month was the anniversary of the dedication of Solomon's temple acquires new significance. According to 1 Kings 8. 2, 65 f., the dedication of the temple was celebrated in connexion with the annual *hag* of seven days. On the eighth day the closing ceremonies of Solomon's dismissal of the people to their homes and their blessing of him occurred. It is a very plausible conjecture that the dedication of the temple was made coincident with the *hag*, not only because of the large crowds that would thus be enabled to be present, but also because so important an event, which, especially in the king's mind, clearly marked the beginning of a new epoch in Israel's history, might be fixed most fittingly for the beginning of a new year. The actual New Year's Day would in all likelihood be the eighth day of the festival, the day of the dismissal of the people. It is noteworthy that just in this connexion the Targum records that the month of *'Etanim*, in which the dedication was celebrated, was actually the beginning of the year. In all likelihood the memory of the association of the dedication of the temple with the ancient New Year's Day prompted this remark of the Targum. At any rate this tradition of the Mishnah, which undoubtedly rests upon a firm, historic foundation, like the other traditions, recorded above, unmistakably associates the tenth day of the seventh month with the pre-exilic celebration of the annual *hag* for seven days, apparently from the third to the ninth of the month, and implies at the same time that the tenth itself was the ancient New Year's Day as well as the day of the conclusion of the ceremonies of dedication and the dismissal of the people.

We have seen that the first day of the *hag*, which, we

have ventured to assert, was celebrated from the ninth to the fifteenth of Ab, was observed as a day of fasting and mourning. We might therefore expect to find the *hag* from the third to the ninth of the seventh month beginning in the same manner. Nor are we disappointed. The third day of the seventh month has become fixed in the Jewish calendar as an annual fast day commemorating the murder of Gedaliah b. Ahikam after the destruction of Jerusalem (cp. 2 Kings 25. 25; Jer. 41. 1 ff.). In Zech. 7. 5 ff. the fast of the seventh month is correlated with that of the fifth month, as if to imply that both fasts had a common origin. This would naturally go hand in hand with the tradition preserved in our Mishnah that the dances on the fifteenth of Ab and on the tenth day of the seventh month likewise had a common origin and manner of celebration. It has been suggested that the fast of the seventh month may perhaps refer to that fast described in Neh. 9. 1 ff. on the twenty-fourth of the month. But there it is clearly implied that that fast is celebrated as a special occasion of expiation and purification, and by no means as an annual occurrence (cp. Siegfried, 104 f.; Bertholet 72). This is certain from the fact that Neh. 8 states clearly that the system of holy days instituted by the Priestly Code had been adopted and put into practice. And in this system no provision is made for a fast on the twenty-fourth of the seventh month. This could therefore have been celebrated on only this one occasion.

It follows accordingly that the fast of the seventh month referred to in Zech. 7. 5 ff. and 8. 19 can mean only this fast on the third of the month, which tradition has associated with the murder of Gedaliah. And just as with the fast of the fifth month, so too it is clearly stated that the fast

of the seventh month had been instituted already seventy years before, at the time of the destruction of the temple, or rather of the murder of Gedaliah. But though there is every reason to believe that the murder of Gedaliah actually occurred on the third day of the seventh month, it is nevertheless difficult to understand why it should have come to be celebrated immediately by a general fast. The story in Jer. 41 nowhere implies that the effects of the murder were far-reaching or partook in any way of the nature of a great national calamity, similar to the destruction of the temple, but merely explains why Jeremiah and his companions sought refuge in Egypt. Nor did the murder apparently have the slightest effect upon the subsequent fortunes of Israel. And since we have had reason to infer that the fast on the ninth of Ab was of ancient origin, and only artificially associated with the destruction of the temple, so too we may be justified in inferring that the fast on the third day of the seventh month, in Zechariah directly, and in our Mishnah indirectly, correlated with the fast on the ninth of Ab, was likewise of ancient origin, and only in the course of time came to be regarded as commemorative of the murder of Gedaliah.

Luckily this hypothesis can be fully corroborated. Jer. 41 gives a detailed account of the murder of Gedaliah and the attendant circumstances. Among other things, the singular detail is chronicled that on the day after the murder, but before it had yet become known to any one, eighty men came from Shechem, Shiloh, and Samaria, with beards shaven, garments rent and having made incisions in their bodies, bringing a *minḥah* and incense to the house of God. Ishmael b. Nethaniah, the murderer, goes out to meet them, weeping, and decoys them into Mizpah,

where he murders them too. All the details of this strange scene cannot be easily explained, above all why Ishmael should go out weeping to meet these men, and why he should decoy them into the city only to murder them. But this much is certain, that the men are clearly represented as in deep mourning, as if for some one dead. Yet it cannot have been Gedaliah, for not only is it expressly stated that this was known to no one as yet, but also they are decoyed into the city by the invitation to come to Gedaliah. That they are bringing up a *minḥah* to the house of God, i.e. apparently to the ruins of the temple at Jerusalem (cp. Duhm, 317; Cornill, 416), would point to the celebration of the *ḥag* or Succot-festival and the bringing of a grain-offering, probably a first-fruit sacrifice, to the central sanctuary. In fact Cornill says that this rite would have to be regarded as a part of the Succot celebration, were it not that the latter fell later in the month, from the fifteenth to the twenty-second. Apparently he has, along with other commentators, lost sight of the fact that the Succot-festival was celebrated at this date only in the post-exilic period, after the adoption of the Priestly Code, and, as we have already established, before the exile, i.e. at the time of the murder of Gedaliah, must have been celebrated from the third to the ninth of the seventh month. Therefore just the piece of evidence that Cornill missed leads to the conclusion that we have to do here with the account of a pre-exilic celebration of the Succot festival, and that the pilgrimage of the eighty men to the house of God, bringing their *minḥah* with them, as well as the accompanying rites of mourning, were all regular details of the pre-exilic celebration of the festival.

It has been suggested that the mourning of the men, so

graphically portrayed, was because of the destruction of the temple, barely two months before (Stade, *Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, I, 698). But this hypothesis is altogether groundless. Certainly the text implies that these rites of mourning, especially the shaving of the beards and the incisions in the bodies, had not been performed two months before, but were still so fresh and recent as to merit remark. The clear implication is that these incisions had just been made, presumably the day before, at the moment of starting out on the pilgrimage to the sanctuary. As Jer. 16. 6 implies, just these were the characteristic rites of mourning for the dead. And on the other hand both Deut. 16. 1 and Lev. 19. 27 f. and 21. 5 definitely and positively prohibit just these rites of mourning as abominations, presumably because they partook of the nature of heathen rites, which both the Deuteronomic and Holiness codes sought to abrogate. It is certain, therefore, that these were no rites of mourning for the destruction of the temple, almost two months before, but that they were regular rites of mourning with which the celebration of the Succot-festival in this early period must have always begun. And as rites of mourning necessarily and invariably imply fasting, we have here positive confirmation of our hypothesis that the third day of the seventh month was celebrated from early times as a fast day and day of mourning, as if for some one dead, marking the beginning of the seven days of the Succot-festival, which culminated in the New Year's Day on the tenth of the month, with the dances of the maidens in the vineyards.

That these dances of the maidens in the vineyards were a regular and integral part of the celebration of the *hag*, and particularly of the Succot-festival in the pre-exilic

period, is clear also from the beautiful picture in Jer. 31. 4-6, 12, of the maidens of Israel, adorned with timbrels, going forth to the dances of the merry-makers, apparently at a time closely related to the sacred pilgrimage to Zion and the beginning of the planting season. At least this much is certain, that this picture is based upon the celebration of just such dances as those of the maidens of Jerusalem and Shiloh in connexion with the celebration of the annual *hag*.

We have thus, we believe, established the existence in pre-exilic Israel of two festivals of ancient origin, and, by the very nature of their rites, especially the dances in the vineyards, of agricultural significance.⁶ Each festival was of seven days' duration, beginning with a period of fasting and mourning, as if for some one dead, continuing then with the sacred pilgrimage and bringing of first-fruits, in later times to the central sanctuary at Jerusalem, but in earlier times certainly to the local shrines, and culminating on the last day with the actual *hag*, or sacred dance, of which the dances of the maidens in the vineyards were probably a gradual evolution. That in these seven-day agricultural festivals the sacred dance or *hag* was celebrated regularly on the last day, or perhaps in some form or other, on the last night (cp. Isa. 30. 29), may be safely inferred from Exod. 13. 6, according to which the actual *hag* of the

⁶ Certainly Graetz's hypothesis (*Geschichte der Juden*⁴, III, 141 f.) that these dances were instituted by the Pharisees during the happy reign of Salome Alexandra (79-69 B. C.) in opposition to the Sadducees is altogether groundless. Ceremonies like these are seldom, if ever, introduced artificially; they can be the result only of the evolution of ancient folk beliefs and practices. Graetz has, moreover, completely ignored the fact that these dances were held on the tenth day of the seventh month, as well as on the fifteenth of Ab. Certainly Pharisaic rigorism would not have countenanced these dances on Yom Kippur.

Mazzot-festival took place on the seventh day. The one festival was celebrated from the ninth to the fifteenth of Ab; the other, the pre-exilic Succot, from the third to the ninth of the seventh month, with the additional celebration of New Year's Day on the following day, the tenth of the month.

In the ritual legislation of the Priestly Code, which regulated the religious calendar in the period after Ezra, the festival in Ab found no place. The fast on the ninth, however, continued to be celebrated traditionally in commemoration of the destruction of the temple, and later in commemoration of the destruction of the second temple and the fall of Bethar, while still later Messianic tradition made it the birthday of the Messiah (Talmud Jer. Berakot II, 45 a, where the story is told that on the very same day, that the temple was destroyed the Messiah was born). And the dances of the maidens of Jerusalem in the vineyards survived for a time, probably until within the recollection of Rabban Simeon b. Gamaliel, as a pretty folk custom. On the other hand the festival of the seventh month, while retained, was completely recast in the new ritual. New Year's Day was logically transferred to the first day of the seventh month. The tenth was made the day of the celebration of the great penitential and expiatory ceremonies of Atonement,⁷ while the Succot-festival was

⁷ There cannot be the least doubt that the institution of the Day of Atonement with its peculiar purpose and ceremonies, particularly that of the goat of Azazel, upon the pre-exilic New Year's Day was no mere chance or arbitrary arrangement of the priestly codicists, but was so fixed for very definite and positive reasons. The ceremony with the goat of Azazel was unquestionably the survival of some ancient ceremony (perhaps a local Jerusalem ceremony, since the goat seems to have been cast down the rocks in historical times at Beth Hadudo not far from Jerusalem (Mishnah Yoma VI, 8. The place is elsewhere called Beth Hadure and

transferred from its original date to the fifteenth–twenty-second of the month, probably to conform to the date

Beth Horon: Jastrow 332 f.). Now the purification of the sins of an entire people, often by means of scapegoats upon which the sins are supposed to be laden bodily, and which are then driven away to perish in some desert place, the abode of evil spirits, is a common practice. It is usually practised once a year, and generally on New Year's Day (cp. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*³, vol. VIII; *The Scapegoat*, 127–30, 133, 145–50, 155, 165, 197, 202 f., 209). It is a by no means far-fetched hypothesis that, in addition to the other New Year's Day ceremonies, to which reference has already been made, on this day rites of purification of the entire people, or at least of the people of Jerusalem, and probably in similar manner of other local communities, were practised, such as that of the goat of Azazel, or other related rites similar to those described by Frazer (*op. cit.*). The little tufts of red wool, which, as the Mishnah records (Yoma VI, 6, 8), were affixed to the goat, were merely the physical representation of the sins of the people laden upon the goat. From Isa. 1. 18, and probably with it Ps. 51, 9, we may safely infer that sins were commonly represented as being red in colour, and the corresponding state of purity white. This too explains the symbolism of the tuft of red wool which, according to R. Ishmael (Mish. Yoma VI, 8), was affixed to the door of the temple, and turned white at the very moment when the goat was cast down the cliffs of Beth Hadudo. (It would lead too far afield to enter into a detailed discussion of the symbolism of the red colour that plays so prominent a rôle in various Biblical purification ceremonies, as, for example, the red heifer (Num. 19), the cedar wood (probably chosen because of its red colour), the scarlet thread, and the hyssop [there is no evidence that the hyssop was red in colour. If its identification with the *Origanum Maru*, L. (cp. Immanuel Löw, 'Der biblische 'ezob' (*Sitzungsber. d. kais. Akad. d. Wissenschaften in Wien*, CLXI (1909), 3, p. 15; also *Aramäische Pflanzennamen*, no. 93, pp. 134 ff.) be correct, it would seem to have white flowers. At the same time, the plant itself, exclusive of the flowers, may have been of reddish colour, or may have been selected for these purification ceremonies for some other reason. According to the Zohar (I, 220 a; II, 41 a, 80 b; quoting Löw, *Der biblische 'ezob*, 11) it was effective in the expulsion of evil spirits. Dalman tells us (*Zeitschrift des deutschen Palästinavereins*, 1912, 124 f.) that the Samaritans use a bunch of the common *za'atar*, or *Origanum Maru*, in their Passover rites, and hold that it is identical with the biblical hyssop. They believe that this plant possesses a certain mysterious, supernatural power, in that a bunch of it placed in blood prevents the latter from congealing. Not impossibly this traditional association of the hyssop

of Passover, six months earlier, from the full moon of the month on. But whereas in the pre-exilic period Succot had actually been a festival of only seven days' duration with the following day, however, the supplementary New Year's Day, in the post-exilic ritual, while still nominally a seven-day festival, there was also intimately associated with it the celebration of the eighth day, Shemini Azeret, a day of particular sanctity and taboo, the real significance of which, even in the Bible, seems shrouded in uncertainty. Yet after our previous exposition there cannot be the slightest doubt that it is nothing but the outcome of the realization that there had been eight actual days of celebration in connexion with the pre-exilic Succot, of which the eighth day was important in itself and bore only a rather loose connexion with the rest of the festival. Thus it happens that Shemini Azeret appears in the Priestly Code as a day, the celebration of which is supplementary to, yet at the same time somewhat independent of, the actual celebration of the seven days of the Succot-festival proper.

with blood may account for its use in the various purification ceremonies in which, as a rule, blood plays the leading rôle], in the ceremonies of the red heifer, and the purification of a leper (Lev. 14. 6 f., 51 ff.). It may, however, be noted in passing that in Babylonian purification ceremonies cedar wood was used extensively (cp. my 'Doctrine of Sin in the Babylonian Religion' (*MVAG.*, 1905, 3, 151)), while, at least occasionally, the priest seems to have worn dark-red garments (*ibid.* 145). Similarly, too, among the Beduin to-day a child about to be circumcised, certainly a critical moment when danger from evil spirits is to be feared, is clad in a red garment (Musil, *Arabia Petraea*, III, 222). Red seems to [have been the favourite colour of evil plague spirits (cp. Gollancz, *The Book of Protection*, XXXIII and LII; Musil, *op. cit.*, 328; v. Duhn, 'Rot und Tot', *Archiv f. Religionswiss.*, IX (1906), 22 f.). In various parts of the world the colour red plays a prominent part in purification ceremonies (Frazer, *op. cit.*, 146, 190-92, 205, 208, 209, 213). This hypothesis would account completely for the fixing in the new religious calendar of Yom Kippur upon the pre-exilic New Year's Day.

The question still remains, in whose honour were these festivals originally celebrated, and, especially, for whom were the rites of mourning, that marked their beginning, performed? It is to-day a generally accepted fact that the biblical agricultural festivals were of Canaanite origin, and merely adopted by Israel when they began to follow an agricultural life in the conquered land. The ancient agricultural religious practices continued to be observed, with comparatively slight modification, at least in the folk religion, down to the exile itself. Against just these rites and practices the prophets protested and the Deuteronomic and Holiness codes legislated, but practically in vain. It needed the complete cutting off of the people from their ancient land and the gods from of old associated with it, and the complete recasting of the religion and ritual in a foreign land, to permit of a fairly, though by no means absolutely, complete eradication of the old Canaanite agricultural rites from the religious practice of the people. Before the exile the old agricultural festivals were celebrated from year to year in form but slightly modified from that of the ancient Canaanite days. But since these festivals must have primarily been celebrated in honour of the old Canaanite gods, we cannot help seeing in these rites of fasting and mourning as if for some one dead, that marked their beginning,⁸ survivals of the ancient mourning for Adonis, the Canaanite god of vegetation, cut off in the flower of his youth, and thus mourned as dead at the

⁸ That the Canaanite Mazzot-festival likewise began with fasting is to be inferred from the present custom of pious Jews that the first-born sons fast on the fourteenth of Nisan ('Orah Hayyim 470) in preparation for the Passover. Furthermore, that the *ḥag*, or sacred dance, of the Mazzot-festival was celebrated on the seventh or last day of the festival is, as said above, to be inferred from Exod. 13. 6.

beginning of all these festivals, and yet believed to rise again to new life. In accord with this belief the rites of these festivals rapidly changed from fasting and mourning to rejoicing and merry-making, often, if not generally, culminating in scenes of gross licence, of which the dances of the maidens in the vineyards, while the young men stood by and selected their wives, were merely a mild survival. This unquestionably correct explanation of the origin and significance of the rites, both of the fasting and mourning that began these festivals, and of the dances that formed their culmination, rounds out, as it were, and completes our chain of argument.

Perhaps final proof, if such be needed, may be found in the fact that the fifteenth of Ab has continued to be celebrated in the Greek and Maronite Churches of Syria as the Festival of the Repose or Assumption of the Virgin. Referring to this day 'the Syrian text of *The Departure Of My Lady Mary From This World* says, "And the apostles ordered that there should be a commemoration of the blessed one on the thirteenth of Ab (another manuscript reads [more correctly] the fifteenth of Ab), on account of the vines bearing bunches (of grapes), and on account of the trees bearing fruit, that clouds of hail, bearing stones of wrath, might not come, and the trees be broken, and their fruits, and the vines with their clusters". ' Similarly in the Arabic text of the apocryphal work *On The Passing Of The Blessed Virgin Mary*, which is attributed to the Apostle John, there occurs the following passage: "Also a festival in her honour was instituted on the fifteenth day of the month Ab, which is the day of her passing from this world, the day on which the miracles were performed, and the time when the fruits of the trees are ripening."

‘Further, in the calendar of the Syrian Church the fifteenth of August (undoubtedly meaning the fifteenth of Ab) is repeatedly designated as the festival of the Mother of God “for the vines”.’⁹ Bliss likewise informs us that in the Greek Church the festival is preceded by a fourteen-days’ fast, while the Maronites observe a fast of eight days. During this fast meat, eggs, cheese, and milk are strictly forbidden (*The Religions of Modern Syria and Palestine*, 156 f.). Likewise, he says, ‘on this day (the fifteenth of Ab) huge crowds, bent quite as much on merry-making as on worship, flock to the convent of the Virgin’ (*op. cit.*, 169). Frazer has correctly surmised that this festival represents merely a christianized survival of an ancient heathen festival. And the evidence here presented shows that it must have been an agricultural festival, calculated to promote the fertility of the trees and vines, that it must have begun with a period of fasting, and presumably of mourning for the dying deity, and culminated on the fifteenth of Ab in a period of merry-making and pilgrimage. This reminds us directly of our pre-exilic festival from the ninth to the fifteenth of Ab. But its picture of the passing of the Virgin reminds us equally of the customary Adonis festivals as described by Lucian (*De Dea Syra*, 6), and others, and even more particularly suggests a connexion with the ancient Babylonian Saccaea-festival, also celebrated in honour of Ishtar, the virgin-goddess, in the same month Ab, presumably at the time when she was thought to depart into the nether-world, the ‘land of no return’, the realm of the dead, in search of her dead lover, Tammuz, the Babylonian Adonis (cp. Baudissin, *Adonis und Esmun*,

⁹ I have quoted directly from Frazer, *The Golden Bough*³, vol. I, *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, 14 f., since the works cited were inaccessible to me.

97-108; Fraser, *The Golden Bough*³, vol. VIII, *The Scapegoat*, 354 ff.). Perhaps, too, it would not be at all far-fetched to find here a striking parallelism with the annual four-day festival by which the maidens of Israel, or probably originally, of Gilead, commemorated the passing of the virgin daughter of Jephtha, undoubtedly with rites similar to those with which she herself is represented as, in company with her maidens, bewailing her virginity upon the mountain tops of Gilead upon which, as the text strangely enough puts it, she had descended (Judges II. 36-40). It requires no great stretch of the imagination to picture the dances of the maidens of Gilead in connexion with the annual *hag* in that part of the country. Whether this was celebrated in Ab, or in the seventh, or even in the eighth month, as was at one time actually the case in Israel (1 Kings 12. 32 f.), and what may have been the real import of the two months represented as elapsing between the moment when Jephtha announces his daughter's impending doom, and the fulfilment of this, cannot be determined.

Into a further discussion of the attendant features of these festivals, the dances of the maidens in the vineyards, the presence of the young men seeking wives in the ranks of the dancers, the white garments, borrowed and dipped in water, the use of the leaves and branches of the four trees (Lev. 23. 40; Neh. 8. 15-17), almost the only detail of the pre-exilic celebration of the Succot-festival preserved in biblical legislation, and undoubtedly a survival of the old Adonis rites, we cannot enter here. As said before, it would lead into a detailed and lengthy consideration of some of the fundamental principles and practices of primitive Semitic religion. We must accordingly reserve this for treatment elsewhere.